ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date: Sept 2025

Review Date: Sept 2026

Believe and Achieve

We want our pupils to believe in themselves, and in God, so that they have the confidence to overcome barriers in order to achieve to the best of their ability whatever they aspire to.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart." Colossians 3:23

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Statement of Intent

St Paul's CE Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that, for some pupils, there are complex barriers to attendance, including poor mental health, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, we, as a staff, aim to ensure that our school environment is calm, safe and supportive so that all pupils want to attend and are ready to learn. (DfE guidance, Feb 2023).

Our whole school approach aims to secure good attendance through an engaging curriculum, high standards of behaviour, a consistent and preventative approach to bullying, quality SEND and pastoral support and an effective use of Pupil Premium Grant.

We are committed to:

- promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- ensuring equality and fairness for all
- ensuring that this policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents
- early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- building strong relationships with our families to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality
- ensuring that parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the education Act 1996, which states that "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND that they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."
- regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support

The school's Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is Miss Budsworth (Principal).

The school's Learning Mentor, Mrs Robinson, is responsible for monitoring and reviewing attendance alongside Miss Budsworth.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996 and 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2015
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963 and 1993
- DfE Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- DfE Children Missing Education 2024
- DfE Child Performance and Activities Licensing Legislation in England 2015
- DfE Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance 2023

The policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Advisory Board (LAB) has responsibility for:

- monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role
- working with the Senior Leadership Team to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against these goals
- regularly reviewing attendance data
- sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds,, including, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy
- having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children
- ensuring there are Children Missing Education guidelines in place that are regularly reviewed and updated

The Principal is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of the policy and all relevant procedures across school
- appointing a member of the school team to monitor and review attendance
- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- ensuring that all pupils have access to full-time education and acting as early as possible to address patterns of absence

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy and ensuring pupils do so
- ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour
- using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated
- where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day
- work in partnership with pupils and families to identify barriers to attendance and other strategies to break down these barriers

The attendance lead (Learning Mentor) is responsible (alongside the Principal) for:

- the overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- following up incidents of persistent poor attendance
- liaising with other agencies (Salford Education Welfare Service) to improve attendance

Pupils are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed activities when in school
- arriving punctually to lessons when in school

Parents are responsible for:

- promoting good attendance and punctuality and ensuring their child attends school every day
- providing accurate and up-to-date emergency contact details
- providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- updating the school if their details change

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

<u>Absence</u>

- arrival at school after the register has closed
- not attending school for any reason

Authorised Absence

- an absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- medical appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave (i.e. hospital appointments)
- religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- an absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised Absence

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- arrival at school after the register has closed
- absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent Absence (PA)

- missing **10% or more** of schooling across the year **for any reason.**

Training of staff

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Local Advisory Board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- the importance of good attendance
- that absence is almost invariably as a result of wider circumstances
- the legal requirements on schools, e.g. taking registers
- the school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- the school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

Attendance Expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality. Pupils are expected to keep their attendance at, or above, 96% throughout the year.

Absence Procedures

Parents are required to contact the school on 0161 850 2455 as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. They will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last. The office team will note the reason for absence and report this to the attendance lead. Alternatively, parents my call into school and report to the school office or report the absence via the Arbor app.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- ascertain the reason for the absence
- ensure the correct safeguarding action is taken
- identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- identify the correct code in order to enter this in the school system

Where a pupil is absent and parents have not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report absence, office staff or the attendance lead will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practical on the first day that they do not attend school.

Where parents are not able to be contacted, a home visit will be made wherever possible on that day. If staff are unable to speak to a parent or carer during the home visit, a letter will be posted thought the letter box asking parents/carers to contact the school as soon as possible.

If a vulnerable pupil is absent, without any communications from parents, the school will contact the relevant Early Help or Social Worker. A home visit may also be carried out by the school.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 96%, the Attendance Lead will arrange a formal meeting with parents.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, a formal meeting will be arranged with parents/carers.

Following an absence of 5 days (equivalent to 10 sessions) a fixed penalty notice (fine) may be issued to both parents on behalf of Salford Local Authority.

New legislation came into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the issuing of penalty notices relating to non-school attendance.

Schools are required to consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to a parent when their child's absence is unauthorised.

Working within a Code of Conduct, Salford Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week period you may receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance.

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (O coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised holidays (G Coded)
- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration (U coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences (O, G and U coded)

Within the new National Framework, there is a national limit to the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices that can be issued to any parent in respect of an individual child, within a three-year period. Each fixed penalty is issued on the basis of per parent/per child – therefore where a child has two parents, two fines may be issued.

The fixed penalty notice amount has increased to the following:

- Penalty Notice One - £160 discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Penalty Notice Two - £160 with no discount offered.

Should a third absence be taken within the three-year period, a parent may be summoned to the Magistrates Court for knowingly failing to secure good attendance at school (Section 444 (1A) of Education Act 1996).
Please note that from 19th August 2024, schools are not able to authorise any leave of absence for holidays.

The local authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for support.

Children with an attendance of 50% or less are identified as severely absent and school will work with parents/carers and other agencies to improve this.

Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance lead, supported by the Principal will:

- establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work
- attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures
- establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - sending letters to parents/warning letters
  - supporting parents with pupil attendance
  - engaging with Salford Education Welfare Service
  - using fixed penalty notices

The school will use attendance data, in line with the Monitoring and Absence section of this policy to develop strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- through pupil reports to parents
- newsletters
- Celebration Worship
- classroom posters
- 100% attendance draw
- roll of Classopoly dice

Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Cared for children
- Young Carers
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEND)
- Pupils who have faced bullying or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having
- establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support
- leading check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- making regular contact with families to discuss progress

- assessing whether early help is needed
- considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have high rates of absence and will work with other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance that these pupils are facing.

A pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant bodies e.g social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Attendance Registers

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session – 1 day = 2 attendance sessions. This register will record whether pupils are:

- present
- absent
- attending an approved educational visit
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school uses the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes are used:

- / present in the morning
- \ present in the afternoon
- L late arrival before the register has closed – between 9:15-9:30am
- B any other approved education activity
- C leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- C1 leave of absence for a performance
- C2 part-time timetable
- D dual registration
- E suspended or permanently excluded
- G holiday not granted by school
- K attending educational provision arranged by the LA
- I illness
- M medical/dental appointment
- N reason for absence not yet established
- O unauthorised absence
- P participating in sporting activity
- R religious observance
- U arrival after registration closed
- X not required to be in school
- V educational visit or trip

- Y exceptional circumstances (such as school site closed due to local or national emergency)
- # planned school closure e.g. school holidays

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code # will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years e.g. induction days

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Term-time Leave

At St Paul's CE Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we promote good attendance and punctuality and require parents to observe the school holiday periods as prescribed.

The Principal is unable to authorise any holidays during term-time.

The Principal is only allowed to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications for this must be made at least two weeks in advance to the proposed start date of the leave of absence requested, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

The decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Principal. The Principal's decision is not subject to appeal.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record, the pupil's attainment and any previous absence requests will be taken into account.

The Principal will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- when a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence (from the current year or previous years)
- where a pupil's unauthorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason
- where a pupil's attainment is below that expected for their year group

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school without authorisation from the Principal will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will result in sanctions, such as a Penalty Notice in line with the Penalty Warning Code of Conduct 2024.

The school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Leave during lunchtimes

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunchtimes with permission from the Principal. It is at the Principal's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents are required to submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunchtimes and submit this to the Principal. The Principal reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, pupils will leave the school premises within **five minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch. If a pupil returns after the close of the afternoon register, they will be marked as late and if a pupil does not return, their absence will be unauthorised.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office then taking them off the premises. The pupil will be signed out and back in using the sig in system at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the school premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

The Principal reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time. This may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing and parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Principal.

Religious observances

Parents are expected to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

The school will seek advice from the religious body in question to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.

Appointments

Parents are expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend appointments as far in advance as possible. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child only misses the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Modelling, Sport and Performances activities, including paid work

Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, al lpupils engaging in performances/activities which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence.

SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. However, their right to education is the same as any other pupil and, therefore, the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as for any other pupils.

In line with the SEND and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policies, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any Education Health Care Plan or Individual Health Care Plan have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help improve attendance where appropriate e.g. Children's Services, Early Help team, School Health team, Emotional-based School Avoidance programme.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributing factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Young Carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case by case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Missing Children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be implemented in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- the member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Principal immediately
- the office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search

- a member of staff will stay with the rest of the class and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Principal
- the following areas will be systematically searched – all classrooms, all toilets, the library, any outbuildings, the school grounds, including the forest area
- available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted
- if the pupil has not been found after five minutes, the parents of the pupil will be notified, using the emergency contact numbers provided
- if the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- the missing pupil's teacher will record the incident on CPOMS, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- if the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a cared for child or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- when the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The Principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Positive Behaviour and Self Esteem policy.

The Principal will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance i.e. Children's Services, Early Help Team, etc.

The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible so that there are additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil when the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education. Parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's level of attendance, absence and punctuality and will ensure that parents

are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance lead will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents (under the direction of the Principal) to improve attendance by addressing specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, the attendance lead will work with the Principal and any other relevant school staff, e.g the DSL or SENDCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance lead will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. Children's Services or Salford Local Authority and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Legal Intervention

As absence is so often symptomatic of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual basis.

Monitoring and analysing attendance

The attendance lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy and authorised and unauthorised absence for:

- the school cohort as a whole
- individual year groups
- individual pupils
- demographic groups e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- other groups of pupils e.g. pupils with SEND, eligible for FSM, etc
- pupils at risk of Persistent Absence

The attendance lead will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half termly, termly and full year basis to identfiy patterns and trends. This will include identifying for each group:

- patterns in uses of certain codes

- particular days of poor attendance
- historic trends of attendance and absence
- barriers to attendance

The attendance lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented.

The Local Advisory Board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support senior leaders in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its data against local, regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas of improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal. The next scheduled date for review is September 2026.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all stakeholders.